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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2217 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to 30 April 2016 and requested me to report to the Council every four months beginning on 1 August 2015. The report provides an update on the situation in the Central African Republic since my report of 1 April 2015 (S/2015/227) and on the implementation of the mandate of MINUSCA.

II. Major developments

A. Political developments

2. The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation was held from 4 to 11 May. More than 600 representatives, including some 120 women, from the country's 16 prefectures and from different communities, religious backgrounds and ethnicities, including the diaspora and the refugee populations, participated in the historic event. The participants discussed four themes in plenary debates and working groups: peace and security; governance; justice and reconciliation; and economic and social development. The inclusive nature of the Forum marked a significant departure from past dialogue and reconciliation efforts by expanding the discussion on the future of the country beyond Bangui-based political elites.

3. On 11 May, delegates adopted by acclamation the Republican pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the Central African Republic, which spells out a set of recommendations based on the Forum's four themes. Discussions in advance of the Forum among representatives of 10 armed groups, the transitional Government and the international community resulted in the signing of a commitment agreement between the Government and the politico-military groups on 23 April by 10 armed groups, and set the stage for the negotiation and signing of an agreement on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and integration into the uniformed State forces of the Central African Republic. In addition, representatives of 10 armed groups and the transitional Government signed, on 5 May, a commitment of politico-military groups to the

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liberation of children associated with armed forces and groups to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers. In the closing stages of the Forum, on 10 May, nine armed groups signed an agreement on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and integration into the uniformed State forces of the Central African Republic. The Front démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain did not sign, however, stating that it had not been allowed to participate in the discussions on peace and security because of quotas on the number of armed groups in that session.

4. Through my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Babacar Gaye, along with my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, who also chaired the Forum, the United Nations continued to provide good offices aimed at supporting the conclusion of the political transition. MINUSCA, as a member of the Forum's preparatory and organizing bodies, provided substantial political and logistical support for the Forum. MINUSCA, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), also facilitated local consultations throughout the country in advance of the Forum to ensure the strengthened participation of community representatives. The Mission also provided secretariat support to regular weekly meetings with the country's international partners: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union, France, the Mediator's team, MINUSCA, the Congo, the United States of America and the World Bank, collectively known as the "Group of Eight".

5. To enable citizen participation in and ownership of the political process, discussions during the Forum were broadcast live across the country through Radio Guira. The station provided around-the-clock coverage and reached citizens in Bambari, Bangui, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bria and Kaga Bandoro.

6. On 23 May, the Transitional Authority established by decree a 25-member follow-up committee, which included seven women, to implement the recommendations of the Forum. The committee membership represents different segments of society, comprising anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka as well as representatives of the diaspora and the international community, including MINUSCA. The committee reports to a steering committee chaired by the Prime Minister and is mandated to establish decentralized structures at the sub-prefecture level. The final reports of the Forum were presented on 2 July to the Head of State of the Transition, who expressed her Government's commitment to the work of the follow-up committee.

7. Meanwhile, at its sixteenth ordinary session, held in N'Djamena on 25 May, the ECCAS Conference of Heads of State and Government authorized the technical extension of the transition to 31 December 2015 in order to permit the Transitional Authority to organize credible and transparent elections before the end of 2015.

8. Efforts to revise the Constitution also continued. During the constitutional review workshop that was held from 3 to 6 July, representatives of Central African civil society, traditional chiefs, magistrates and armed groups worked with representatives of the Transitional Government and the National Transitional Council to make final amendments to the draft constitution. Consistent with the Constitutional Charter, the Transitional Government transmitted to the Constitutional Court, on 15 July, the draft Constitution as amended by workshop participants. MINUSCA continued to support the constitutional review process in order to enable the holding of a constitutional referendum on 4 October, including

by supporting efforts to foster cooperation between the legislative and executive branches.

9. On 6 July, a presidential decree was issued to reduce the number of special advisers in the Prime Minister's Cabinet, while increasing the number of envoys, resulting in a total of 52 Cabinet members, up from 44. The decree also incorporates two new portfolios: one to follow up on the transition road map and the second to liaise with the international forces.

10. On 27 July, the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic met in Addis Ababa. Among the conclusions were the need to uphold the right of refugees to vote in the elections; the importance of respecting the ineligibility clause of the Transitional Charter; and the imperative to respect the electoral calendar. The conclusions also emphasized the need to forge a national consensus on security sector reform and its links to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. The Group also called upon the Transitional Authority to ensure that the deployment of the Central African Armed Forces was undertaken in full coordination with MINUSCA.

B. Preparations for the elections

11. Notable progress has been made in preparing for the referendum and the elections. That process has been accelerated by the establishment in April of a strategic committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, Mahamat Kamoun, with the participation of the National Electoral Authority, key government ministers and members of the Group of Eight.

12. On 16 June, the strategic committee adopted a revised electoral calendar, setting the dates for: voter registration (27 June to 27 July); the constitutional referendum (4 October); the first round of combined presidential and legislative elections (18 October); and a second round (22 November), should there be no winner in the first round. In addition, voting centres have been mapped and voter registration materials and equipment delivered. On 29 June, the voter registration process was launched; it was to conclude on 27 July. Meanwhile, as at 15 July, the National Electoral Authority had established 151 local branches and sworn in 1,057 election personnel in the country and abroad.

13. With regard to the participation of refugees in the elections, on 1 June, the Transitional Authority issued a decree identifying the 12 countries in which the National Electoral Authority would establish a total of 16 branches to allow Central Africans living abroad to participate in the constitutional referendum and the presidential election. The strategic committee noted the urgency of negotiating tripartite accords with relevant host countries and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to allow refugees to participate in the electoral process. Despite the rejection by the National Transitional Council of relevant provisions in the draft electoral code, the Constitutional Court decided, on 20 July, to reinstate the right of Central African refugees to vote in the elections.

14. Significant efforts to solicit international support and mobilize funds for the elections notwithstanding, a critical funding gap of $11 million out of the required $36.6 million remains, including a gap of 48 per cent in the basket fund for elections managed by UNDP. Of the estimated $25.7 million pledged,

approximately $11.4 million has been disbursed. Efforts are under way to find mitigating measures that could further reduce the budget, including in-kind contributions and the identification of additional donors.

15. MINUSCA continued to provide logistical and technical support to facilitate the establishment of National Electoral Authority offices inside and outside the country. It also devised security plans for the elections and provided logistical support for transporting electoral materials from Bangui to the regions.

16. In June, the United Nations integrated electoral assistance team (MINUSCA/UNDP) assisted the National Electoral Authority with the deployment of voter registration materials. MINUSCA electoral staff were also deployed to 17 field locations and will continue to reinforce the technical, planning and logistical capacity of local Authority offices. The United Nations has further supported the mapping of voter registration centres and begun to train voter registration experts who will be deployed throughout the country.

17. In support of women's participation in the electoral process, MINUSCA, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) supported the establishment of a national database of women for potential leadership roles in decision-making bodies of the Government.

C. Reconciliation

18. Efforts were undertaken by the Transitional Authority and the United Nations to promote reconciliation and reintegration, in particular for those at risk, including young people. The Ministry of Reconciliation, working closely with the United Nations, focused on establishing local mediation mechanisms. At the national level, UNDP, in close coordination with MINUSCA and with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, supported the implementation of the National Reconciliation Strategy. Efforts to promote reintegration and reconciliation included continued support by MINUSCA and the International Organization for Migration for the voluntary relocation of ex-Séléka elements from their camps in Bangui to their communities of origin or choice.

19. In close coordination with the Transitional Authority and the United Nations country team, MINUSCA initiated labour-intensive income-generating projects for young people at risk in communities affected by conflict. Pilot projects began in Bambari, Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro to employ young people from armed groups and local communities in non-skilled labour initiatives to rehabilitate local infrastructure. In addition, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security announced financial support for a pilot project for social cohesion, conflict prevention and human security to support young people in the Central African Republic.

D. Security situation

20. The security situation in Bangui and key towns continued gradually to improve but, the general situation across the country remained volatile owing to clashes between armed groups, criminal activities and violence relating to the seasonal migration of Fulani (Peuhl) cattle herders. Protection assistance from

MINUSCA, humanitarian actors and the French Sangaris force continued to deter and restrict activities of armed groups, although civilians continued to face security threats, in particular in the western and central parts of the country. Enclaves of vulnerable populations, nearly all Muslim, remained under threat.

21. Armed groups, driven by criminal, economic or political interests, continued to assert control in parts of the country. Anti-Balaka factions dominated the west while ex-Séléka elements controlled areas in the north and east. Elements of the two groups clashed regularly in the central part of the country. The Central African Republic also continued to face threats from other armed groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army in the east, Révolution et Justice in the north and the Front démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain in the west.

22. In Bangui, the security situation stabilized but remained unpredictable, in particular in the city's third, fourth, fifth and eighth districts, where gang-related crime and violence remained problematic. On 17 May, with the complicity of six national gendarmes, the anti-Balaka leader, Eugene Ngaikosset, known as the "butcher of Paoua", escaped from the custody of the national gendarmerie.

23. In the west, the security situation remained challenging, particularly in areas bordering Cameroon and Chad, where anti-Balaka affiliated groups, as well as the Front démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain and Révolution et Justice, continued to pursue criminal activities. MINUSCA continued to provide armed escorts to commercial and humanitarian convoys along the main supply road. MINUSCA also undertook a number of robust operations, including one on 21 May to expel elements of the Front démocratique from the Baboua-Beloko route and another in mid-June in Zoulombo. Those operations resulted in the dismantling of one Front démocratique camp.

24. Attacks by armed groups increased during the reporting period, however, with 13 incidents reported in July. For example, on 3 July, a peacekeeper suffered gunshot wounds during an attack against a MINUSCA-escorted convoy, on 18 July, armed attackers shot at a World Food Programme vehicle, killing the driver, and on 28 July, a peacekeeper was severely wounded in an attack against MINUSCA in Deba village. MINUSCA has taken further steps to address the insecurity and has redeployed additional forces to those areas.

25. In Gamboula-Amada Gaza, Mambere-Kadei prefecture, several significant confrontations between Fulani herders from Cameroon and anti-Balaka groups were reported. On 2 May, armed elements attacked 11 villages, reportedly killing 40 civilians and displacing at least 87 families toward Gamboula, while others took refuge in Cameroon. In response, MINUSCA conducted robust military operations to improve security in the area.

26. In Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, in the central part of the Central African Republic, Operation "Arms-free city" significantly improved security, encouraged the ex-Séléka to vacate public buildings and allowed the displaced population to begin returning to their villages. MINUSCA also discovered an illegal detention facility with 18 detainees, run by the ex-Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique. To date, MINUSCA has secured the release of seven of the detainees; efforts to release the others are continuing.

27. Following a security incident on 8 April involving Mbororo herders and members of the local community, an armed mob of some 600 to 800 individuals

attacked the MINUSCA camp in Kaga Bandoro on 10 April, slightly wounding 10 peacekeepers. In addition, from 14 to 16 May, clashes between Mbororo herders and the local population reportedly resulted in the death of at least nine civilians and the displacement of more than 1,460 people from surrounding villages to Kaga Bandoro. Meanwhile, in Kouango sub-prefecture, south of Bambari, an economic centre between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, Union pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-Balaka elements clashed in late April and early May, leaving 32 people dead.

28. In the eastern and northern parts of the country, the two main ex-Séléka armed groups, the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, continued to assert influence in their areas of control, but attacks against civilians were rare. Activities by the Lord's Resistance Army reportedly increased in the Yalinga area, Haute Kotto prefecture, where the population deserted some villages fearing attacks by the group.

III. Protection of civilians

29. The protection of civilians in response to serious threats of physical violence remained the highest priority task for MINUSCA, which continued to work closely with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to identify and address protection issues. MINUSCA forces and police continued to intensify protection efforts in priority areas and responded to a number of serious threats to civilians. In Bangui, MINUSCA police and forces, as part of the Joint Task Force, conducted targeted operations to protect civilians by containing the movement of armed elements.

30. Displaced Fulani stranded in Yaloké and in several other areas in the region continued to be subjected to serious violations of human rights, including enslavement, sexual exploitation and other abuses. From 21 to 25 April and 5 to 9 May, respectively, a joint assessment mission and a joint protection team comprising representatives of MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and humanitarian actors visited Ombella-Mboko and Mambere-Kadei prefectures. Those missions resulted in the release of 91 Fulani who had been unlawfully detained or enslaved by anti-Balaka elements. They were resettled under MINUSCA protection.

31. MINUSCA, UNHCR, UNICEF, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian partners made use of their good offices role to advocate at the highest levels of the Transitional Authority for the right to freedom of movement for internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic. The effort culminated in a visit on 20 May, led by the Prime Minister and my Deputy Special Representative to Yaloké, during which the Prime Minister publicly confirmed the right to free movement for all Central Africans. Following the visit, MINUSCA, UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs facilitated the safe departure from Yaloké of an estimated 300 Fulani, while UNHCR successfully advocated entry into Cameroon by 23 Fulani who had left by their own means and were stranded in Garoua-Boulai. Early in July, a further 61 Fulani requested to be relocated by UNHCR to Cameroon; 281 Fulani have chosen to remain in Yaloké.

32. The increased presence of Fulani nomads in Ouham prefecture triggered a joint protection mission conducted by MINUSCA and the Transitional Authority in Ben Zambe, Bossangoa and Nana-Bakassa from 6 to 9 July. The assessment was

followed by a joint high-level mission to Nana-Bakassa sub-prefecture on 22 July, led by the Minister of Territorial Administration. The visit was aimed at mitigating the growing risk of community violence resulting from the recent arrival of an ex-Séléka group in the area.

33. In the Kaga Bandoro-Mbres area, MINUSCA, in coordination with the French forces, led two robust operations to reduce conflict between Fulani, ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka elements. Investigations by a joint protection mission in Kouango sub-prefecture, south of Bambari, on 28 April and 8 May, confirmed 36 empty villages, including 27 totally or partially burned down, and reported that the destruction was the result of a cycle of attacks and reprisals by Union pour la paix en Centrafrique and anti-Balaka elements.

34. MINUSCA continued to adjust its military presence in line with its integrated analysis of threats to civilians. The Mission established temporary operating bases in Gamboula, Kuango, Markounda, Mbres and Paoua, all priority protection flashpoints. In June, MINUSCA trained and deployed 24 community liaison assistants to 20 company operating bases to serve as links between the Mission's military component and local communities in order to enhance its early warning and response capability.

IV. Human rights

35. The human rights situation remained of concern throughout the country. All parties to the conflict continued to commit human rights violations, while civilians continued to be affected during intercommunal clashes. Between 1 April and 30 June, MINUSCA documented 208 new incidents, with 240 victims, including 60 women, 24 boys and 10 girls, alongside other allegations still under investigation. Most violations reported to MINUSCA were committed by anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka elements. Of serious concern are verified cases of arbitrary killings, sexual- and gender-based violence, cruel and inhumane treatment and arbitrary arrest and detention and restrictions on the freedom of movement, in particular of internally displaced persons. Accusations of witchcraft targeted older women and children in particular, resulting in a number of serious abuses and unlawful killings, including by burying victims alive.

36. MINUSCA continued to monitor, investigate and advocate with local and national actors. On 14 May, armed Fulani affiliated with elements of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique attacked the localities of Bissingalé and the waterfall of Nana, in greater Kaga Bandoro. During the attack, at least seven civilians were killed and four seriously injured.

37. Further to recommendations made in the Bangui Forum, MINUSCA organized a workshop for lawyers on 18 and 19 May on the right to truth, reparations and commemoration. The Mission also conducted a two-month awareness-raising campaign on human rights, focusing on peace and social cohesion between communities, due process and the role and importance of the judiciary, with more than 2,500 participants from civil society, including university students, community leaders and community members. During the reporting period, awareness-raising sessions were conducted for 660 members of the national armed forces, including 13 women, in Camp Kassaï, Bangui. Participants received training on human rights principles, standards and instruments and the Mission's human rights mandate.

38. The Independent Expert on Human Rights for the Central African Republic, Marie-Therese Keita Bocoum, conducted her fifth mission to the country from 16 to 24 June. On 30 June, she presented her preliminary report to the Human Rights Council in the presence of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Reconciliation and a representative of the interreligious platform.

V. Conflict-related sexual violence

39. Conflict-related sexual violence continued at unacceptable levels. Armed groups committed sexual- and gender-based violence against civilians across the country, predominantly against women and girls. Internally displaced persons were particularly at risk. Between 1 April and the end of the reporting period, the gender-based violence subcluster assisted at least 216 victims of sexual violence with specialized medical, legal and psychosocial services. In April, the subcluster reported 85 incidents of sexual violence against women and girls in a single prefecture (Nana-Gribrizi) in which most perpetrators were armed elements. In response, MINUSCA dispatched patrols to the affected areas and worked with local actors on raising the awareness of communities.

40. MINUSCA and the United Nations Population Fund together led United Nations efforts on reinforcing joint initiatives on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence, including through the strengthening of existing alert systems and the provision of medical treatment, legal advice and psychosocial support to sexual violence survivors. MINUSCA, through its police component, raised awareness of preventive measures and responsive policing to combat sexual violence. Efforts are currently under way to deploy additional MINUSCA protection officers for women in Bangui and in field offices in Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro.

VI. Child protection

41. MINUSCA and UNICEF continued together to lead the United Nations task force on the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children. In April, 272 children (91 girls and 181 boys) had self-demobilized from the anti-Balaka; they were provided with psychosocial support by UNICEF partners.

42. MINUSCA documented two incidents of the killing of children and 86 child victims of violence, 4 of whom were injured by the explosion of an abandoned grenade and 7 by gunshots. In Bangui, on 3 June, 87 schoolchildren were slightly injured while fleeing the Lycée Boganda, following an armed attack by anti-Balaka elements against MINUSCA forces. During the attack, two military officers serving with the Bangui Joint Task Force were injured, one sustaining gunshot wounds. MINUSCA supported the transport of the children to surrounding hospitals, where they received medical and psychosocial assistance. MINUSCA also identified 62 children, between 13 and 17 years of age, held in detention in prisons in Bangui and subjected to ill-treatment.

43. On 14 May, following the agreement at the Bangui Forum to end the recruitment and use of children by armed forces or groups, 357 children were released in Bambari by the anti-Balaka and 2 by ex-Séléka groups: the Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique and the Union pour

la paix en Centrafrique. The released children received psychosocial assistance and support for reintegration into their communities of origin.

44. During the reporting period, MINUSCA trained more than 860 officers and soldiers of the national armed forces, local authorities (sous-préfets) and members of civil society on child protection. MINUSCA also established a child protection unit within its police component to facilitate the training of national security forces personnel and increase awareness on child protection.

VII. Humanitarian

45. More than 2.7 million people were still living in dire humanitarian conditions. More than 460,000 Central Africans were refugees in neighbouring countries, an increase from the last reporting period by some 25,000 since January. Meanwhile, 400,000 Central Africans remained displaced within the country: as at 30 June, UNHCR reported 244,819 Central African refugees in Cameroon, 98,281 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 91,211 in Chad and 27,654 in the Congo. New displacements continued to be reported in the Kaga Bandoro area and near the border with Cameroon, an increase caused mainly by insecurity in the border areas, notably Kouango, and recent clashes in border areas between the Central African Republic and Cameroon (Gamboula-Amada-Gaza). Humanitarian resources have been stretched; an estimated $613 million is urgently required to cover the needs of 2 million people in 2015, with only 18 per cent of the required funds received to date.

46. After having doubled the number of humanitarian actors operating in the country and strengthened humanitarian leadership and coordination mechanisms, on 13 May, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations deactivated its level-3 system-wide emergency response for the Central African Republic, which had been in place since December 2013. Subsequently, on 27 May, I appointed my Deputy Special Representative and Resident Coordinator in the Central African Republic also as Humanitarian Coordinator.

VIII. Socioeconomic developments

47. The economy of the Central African Republic remained stagnant, with a growth rate of 1 per cent. Inflation was at 15.3 per cent, owing to the rise in food prices. Because of inflation and the impact of the conflict, 1.5 million people remained in acute food insecurity. Agriculture contributes 50 per cent of the gross domestic product and provides more than 75 per cent of the food consumed in the country. The 2015 budget and revenue projections are not likely to be met, given the financial constraints of the Central African Republic. The cumulative effect of the crisis has affected women and girls in particular, due in large part to chronic insecurity and the erosion of the social fabric and productive capital. More than 75 per cent of the working population relies on income from the agricultural sector and women comprise 81 per cent of the workforce in that sector.

IX. Extension of State authority

48. MINUSCA, in cooperation with the United Nations country team, continued to support the restoration and extension of State authority, including through the rehabilitation and equipping of State offices and buildings in and outside Bangui through the use of quick-impact projects.

49. MINUSCA, in coordination with France and the Ministry of Territorial Administration, trained 50 newly nominated sous-préfets on administrative management and election-related procedures and equipped them and supported their deployment. In April and May, MINUSCA trained préfets and sous-préfets on mediation and conflict resolution practices.

50. MINUSCA, together with relevant agencies of the United Nations country team, continued to support the deployment of national police outside Bangui. The renovation of the national police headquarters in Bangui was completed in May. MINUSCA also carried out joint police activities with the national security forces and the border-airport police.

X. Justice and the rule of law

51. The key recommendations of the Bangui Forum's thematic group on justice and reconciliation were the creation of a national human rights commission, transitional justice mechanisms, a commission on truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation and the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court. MINUSCA provided advice to the national authorities on the implementation of the recommendations.

52. MINUSCA supported the Ministry of Justice in developing a strategic plan to extend the rule of law across the country by gradually reopening courts and detention facilities. With the assistance of MINUSCA, the Ministry deployed magistrates to 18 of the country's 28 courts. Together with UNDP and UN-Women, MINUSCA initiated a joint programme to support jury trials at the Court of Appeals in Bangui. The court has registered 70 cases (with 104 male and 8 female defendants), which include such serious crimes as murder, criminal conspiracy, the mutilation of bodies, the illegal possession of arms and corruption. Further efforts will be devoted to ensuring the prosecution of sexual- and gender-based violence cases, accompanied by the provision of protection and support to victims. The court began hearings on 30 June. In the area of corrections, MINUSCA conducted more than 20 training sessions on prison security for prison workers. The Mission also supported efforts by the judicial authorities to address the backlog of cases, which is the principal cause of prolonged detention.

A. Implementation of urgent temporary measures

53. In accordance with paragraph 32 (f) of Security Council resolution 2217 (2015), MINUSCA arrested more than 85 criminal suspects during the reporting period and more than 365 criminal suspects from 15 September 2014 to 30 June 2015 and facilitated their transfer from various regions to Bangui under its urgent temporary measures mandate, in coordination with other international forces.

Apprehended suspects included individuals accused of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. MINUSCA provided technical advice to the judicial police, prosecutors and investigative magistrates on due process procedures. Two detention facilities (Camp de Roux and Ngaragba prison) are being rehabilitated to isolate the most dangerous detained criminals.

B. Special Criminal Court

54. On 3 June, the Head of State of the Transition promulgated the statute establishing the Special Criminal Court, after the National Transitional Council had integrated the observations of the Constitutional Court into the law. The Court will be composed of 13 national and 12 internationally recruited magistrates. The prosecution office will be headed by an international prosecutor. While the Court will generally apply Central African laws, the death penalty has been excluded. The law does not provide for amnesty or immunity in cases involving crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide. MINUSCA deployed experts to advise the authorities on the resources necessary to make the Court operational, in particular its budget.

XI. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

55. Building on the outcome of the Bangui Forum, MINUSCA supported efforts by the Transitional Authority to negotiate with armed groups the terms and modalities of the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation signed during the Forum. The agreement outlined the eligibility criteria for former combatants; arrangements for being regrouped under a preliminary disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme preceding the launch of the national programme; a timeline for the new national plan on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; conditions for potential individual integration into the defence and security forces; specific arrangements for vulnerable groups; and the repatriation of foreign combatants.

56. In June, MINUSCA intensified efforts to mobilize funds for preliminary disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation activities and developed an initial project document in collaboration with the Transitional Authority and the World Bank. On the basis of the initial project document, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme will require $28.5 million for the demobilization and community reintegration of an estimated 7,000 combatants from armed groups. In addition, $20 million is required for the implementation of a community violence reduction programme targeting around 70,000 people to complement the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and address the issue of violence and young people at risk in the communities. Funding has yet to be identified for the programmes.

57. MINUSCA is carrying out programmes to support former combatants with food and installation kits to provide for the basic needs of former combatants and their families. In conjunction with the international community, MINUSCA has set up labour-intensive projects for former combatants to prepare for the launch of the national programme. Efforts to promote voluntary disarmament included support for the relocation of ex-Séléka elements and families gathered in the Support and

Service Batallion, the Operational Defence of the Territory Regiment and the Béal camps in Bangui, with financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund. MINUSCA has set up a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation joint task force with the Transitional Authority and the international community, which is engaged in a large awareness-raising campaign in advance of the extension of the pre-disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation activities to the 16 targeted locations.

Weapons and ammunitions management

58. During the reporting period, MINUSCA retrieved 995 unsafe weapons and items of ammunition in Bangui and evaluated 99 weapons seized in the capital and other cities, including Bria. Following negotiations, facilitated by MINUSCA, between the ex-Séléka and the Transitional Authority, the United Nations Mine Action Service and MINUSCA, on 4 July in Bangui, removed a stockpile of some 6 tons of explosives from Camp Béal for destruction. The range-of-danger perimeter in case of explosion thus decreased from 400 to 190 m. On 29 April, the Mission initiated the construction of a permanent armoury in Camp Kassaï, with the capacity to store 1,000 weapons.

59. The Mission conducted 692 education sessions on the risk of weapons and explosives for 19,213 children and 8,947 adults in Bangui. To date, 35,164 people have received such briefings. The Mission also completed "training-of-trainers" sessions on counter-improvised explosive device awareness and certified 19 MINUSCA personnel as trainers.

XII. Security sector reform and vetting

60. MINUSCA continued to provide strategic advice and to co-chair the Technical Committee on Security Sector Reform under the Strategic Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform that had adopted the principles of the future defence forces and the criteria for the integration of former combatants. As at 15 July, MINUSCA, in cooperation with the French forces, the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, had assisted the Ministry of Defence in the preliminary verification of some 2,130 national armed forces personnel.

61. UNDP, in close cooperation with MINUSCA, completed the rehabilitation of Camp Kassaï, the military hospital in Camp Oubru in Bangui and the Camp de Roux high-security prison and three gendarmeries brigades in Bangui. MINUSCA also supported the development of a human resources management database for the national armed forces.

62. On 12 May, the Committee of Ministers of Defence of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held an extraordinary meeting in Luanda. Among the key recommendations were the establishment of a military experts committee and its dispatch to the Central African Republic to assess the country's military needs.

XIII. Coordination of international assistance

63. MINUSCA, together with the United Nations country team, continued to support the Transitional Authority in strengthening international assistance coordination mechanisms to better align multiple approaches by international partners. The United Nations helped the aid coordination unit of the Transitional Authority to develop a database and a system for evaluating international assistance. In that context, the United Nations continued to support the realization of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States initiative, including through established national structures. As a result, Bangui Forum participants adopted the New Deal approach and the recommendation on the need to outline specific commitments between the country and its development partners.

64. On 26 May, the European Union convened a high-level conference on the Central African Republic in Brussels to present the first results of the European Union "Bêkou" Trust Fund and its future goals. The meeting resulted in a total of €377,868 in pledges (€180,945 from the European Union and its member States (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) and €196,923 from the African Development Bank, the African Union, the World Bank, Switzerland and the United States of America). Only a portion of the funds announced reflected new funds.

XIV. Deployment of the Mission

A. Military

65. As at 14 July, MINUSCA had completed the deployment of some 9,389 military personnel, or approximately 87.3 per cent of the total authorized military strength of MINUSCA of 10,750 troops (including 480 staff officers and military observers). The figures include the deployment of 10 of 11 infantry battalions and most of the necessary enablers, including three engineer companies, two level II hospitals, two signal companies and two helicopter units. However, gaps in contingent-owned equipment continue to pose a significant challenge for certain contingents that have yet to meet United Nations standards.

66. With the increased number of troops in theatre, MINUSCA continued to extend its military presence throughout the country, including in Vakaga prefecture. The Mission maintained 46 operating bases comprising 35 permanent and 11 temporary bases.

B. Police

67. As at 14 July, MINUSCA comprised 307 individually deployed police officers (51 women and 256 men) or 76 per cent of the total authorized strength of 400 police officers, and 1,248 personnel of formed police units, including 66 women. Overall, 75 per cent of the total of 2,080 authorized police personnel and 9 of 10 formed police units have been deployed. The deployment of police officers outside Bangui continued, with officers deployed in Bossangoa, Bouar and Bria and one fully formed police unit deployed in Bouar.

C. Mission concept and revised component concepts

68. The revised mission concept has taken into account new elements on the prioritization and phasing of tasks set out in resolution 2217 (2015). In that context, the immediate priority of MINUSCA is to support activities that will conclude the political transition by the end of 2015 (phase III), leading to long-term support for stabilization activities (phase IV), when a newly elected Government is installed. The prioritization of mandated tasks is reflected in the prioritization of the resources of the Mission in each phase.

69. In line with the mission concept, the military concept of operations is being adjusted, taking into consideration specific demands to protect civilians as well as provide military support to the electoral process and the extension of State authority.

70. MINUSCA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations undertook an assessment from 18 to 27 May to assess measures to enhance the effectiveness of the Bangui Joint Task Force. Recommendations focused on strengthening the command and control structure of the Task Force, increasing the performance of the patrols and identifying resource and logistical gaps hampering its effective functioning. The need for streamlined procedures and common terminology between military and police personnel was also highlighted as a challenge.

71. MINUSCA is also finalizing its revised concept of operations for the police, taking into consideration lessons learned since 15 September 2014. All formed police units will deploy in Bangui, except for one in Bouar. MINUSCA continued to support the national security forces in maintaining law and order in its areas of deployment and protecting civilians, especially the return of the displaced persons at Bangui M'Poko airport to their places of origin.

D. Status-of-forces agreement

72. The Mission has been experiencing challenges with regard to compliance with the status-of-forces agreement by the Central African authorities. The problem of the imposition of taxes and duties on the importation of goods by MINUSCA has been resolved. Other issues remain, however, including the imposition of a tax on fuel, Mission equipment and supplies and on the personal effects of staff, as well as a 12 per cent per annum registration fee on residential leases.

XV. Safety and security of United Nations staff

73. United Nations personnel and other humanitarian personnel operated under increasing threats relating to armed conflict and criminality. The overall security threat levels for United Nations civilian personnel remained substantial in the parts of the country in which armed groups were present. Following a relative reduction in the number of security incidents affecting humanitarian personnel, an increase was observed in the central part of the country in June. During the reporting period, MINUSCA peacekeepers were attacked or ambushed on 20 occasions, resulting in injuries to 15 staff members.

XVI. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

74. During the reporting period, allegations of misconduct against MINUSCA personnel were reported, including some very serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, including against children, as well as the excessive use of force, which on 10 June led to the death of two civilians. In response, MINUSCA took immediate action and repatriated the peacekeepers involved in the case, without prejudice to the investigation and prosecution in their home country. The Force Commander and the Police Commissioner issued directives to tighten command and control and emphasize the United Nations standards of conduct. MINUSCA also reiterated to all personnel the applicable rules and regulations, including the Organization's zero-tolerance policy, and stepped up its activities in providing training, including refresher training, to existing military and police personnel. The Mission has reinforced preventive measures, including by conducting regular spot checks of areas and places conducive to sexual misconduct. Risk assessments of military and police installations are also under way. The implementation of the United Nations strategy for victim assistance, in coordination with in-country partners, remains a priority.

XVII. Financial aspects

75. In its resolution 69/257 B, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $814.1 million for the maintenance of MINUSCA for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

76. As at 16 July 2015, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for MINUSCA amounted to $135.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1,740.2 million.

77. As at 16 July 2015, amounts owed to Member States contributing troops to MINUSCA totalled $26.8 million. The reimbursements for troop costs and contingent-owned equipment costs have been made for the periods up to 30 April 2015 and 31 March 2015, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XVIII. Observations

78. The Bangui Forum marked an historic milestone in the Central African transition and the country's path towards long-term peace and stability. I congratulate the people of the Central African Republic for their courage and for their determination to take their destiny into their own hands. The Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction should serve as a road map for the country's future. The agreements on the principles for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and on halting the use of children in armed conflict were also significant achievements.

79. I urge all national stakeholders, with the support of regional and international partners, to ensure that the outcomes of the Forum meet the expectations of citizens. Priority areas include advancing the electoral process; the disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration or repatriation of members of armed groups and the release of the children among their ranks; security sector reform; efforts to combat impunity; and the promotion of the rule of law. In this regard, I urge the Transitional Authority and relevant national actors to take courageous steps to implement the recommendations. I appeal to the international community to sustain their efforts and provide the required support in this regard for the long term.

80. I welcome the efforts to establish a commission on truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation as well as the ongoing local reconciliation initiatives. Such efforts will be critical tools for healing the social fabric of the country and for addressing the core grievances of the victims of the conflict as well as marginalized populations. The integration of women's perspectives into all these areas will be vital to securing a long-lasting and sustainable peace. The United Nations, in tandem with international partners, will play a leading role in supporting the establishment of such mechanisms. While reconciliation is a process that takes time, I call upon all national actors to continue to actively promote and work for reconciliation at all levels of society.

81. I commend the Transitional Authority for its promulgation of the law on the establishment of the Special Criminal Court and for their continued commitment to combating impunity. Financial and technical support from regional and international partners will be critical to the establishment and operationalization of the Court. I encourage the Transitional Authority to continue efforts to develop, through an inclusive and participatory process, a wider strategy for combating impunity and ensuring justice for the victims of crimes committed in the Central African Republic. Such a strategy should ensure complementarity between judicial and non-judicial mechanisms. The United Nations stands ready to further provide support to the judicial authorities in this regard.

82. In the coming months, it will be important to move forward on the implementation of the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, signed by the Government and armed groups at the Bangui Forum. The agreement is fragile because of continued divisions within, and shifting alliances among, armed groups. All armed groups should seize this opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to peace and their engagement in the future of their country, and enter the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. I also urge all parties to intensify efforts to defuse tensions through confidence-building measures and to continue dialogue to further advance the peace process. MINUSCA, through its good offices, will continue to remain engaged with all parties concerned to broaden the gathering together of former combatants in areas outside Bangui in order to help to improve the security situation before the elections. Nevertheless, spoilers will not be allowed to derail the process and the broader implementation of the Bangui Forum outcomes.

83. Meanwhile, concerted international efforts and close consultations between the Central African authorities and their partners are critical for advancing holistic and sustainable security sector reform, including that of the armed forces and the police into multi-ethnic, regionally balanced and professional security forces, and their strengthening in accordance with international standards. A key element will be to ensure civilian control of all defence and security forces.

84. I wish to commend the Transitional Authority for its commitment and the progress achieved towards the holding of the constitutional referendum and

presidential and legislative elections before the end of 2015. The upcoming elections will not only mark the end of the transition, but also a new beginning for the Central African Republic, an opportunity for all Central Africans to participate in the construction of a new future for their country, for and by themselves. The institutions that will be elected will have the great responsibility of healing the deep wounds opened by the conflict, restoring a functioning State throughout the territory and driving a recovery process that should benefit all on an equitable basis. It will be vital, as the Central Africans work towards those goals, for the international community to remain at their side.

85. The United Nations and international partners are preparing to coordinate and provide logistical and security support for the elections. I appreciate the efforts by international partners and national stakeholders to remain committed to advancing the electoral process. Areas of concern, however, persist. I call upon all national stakeholders to ensure the swift adoption and application of the revised electoral code to ensure inclusive elections, and for this legal framework to be accompanied by specific measures to allow all Central African citizens, including refugees and displaced persons, the opportunity to exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections. To this end, I commend MINUSCA and the Group of Eight for intensifying their engagement with national stakeholders to ensure that no Central African is left behind at this crucial juncture in the country's history.

86. I also urge all actors in the electoral process, including the Transitional Authority and the National Electoral Authority, to continue to accelerate preparations for the holding of free, fair, transparent and inclusive presidential and legislative elections. While I am encouraged by the significant progress achieved to date, I remain deeply concerned about the financial gaps that risk undermining and derailing the important progress made in the political process. Our support is even more critical at this point in the Central African transition. Funding is also critically needed to implement the outcomes of the Bangui Forum, in particular disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as well as reconciliation efforts and the establishment of the Special Criminal Court.

87. I therefore urge Member States to step forward and bridge the relatively small funding gap remaining for the organization of elections and to support the other essential processes that will consolidate peace and enable both a successful end for the transition and a sound basis for future development. We cannot let lack of funding undo the remarkable political progress made. The country stands at a critical juncture. We must together do our utmost to ensure long-term peace and stability for the Central African people. This will require considerable effort and responsibility on the part of both the Central Africans and the international community. I count on the Transitional Authority, neighbouring States and the United Nations family and its partners to redouble their efforts to ensure a successful and peaceful transition.

88. The security situation remains volatile, continued improvements in Bangui and in key towns notwithstanding. I remain deeply concerned about continued serious human rights violations and abuses, including acts of sexual- and gender-based violence, perpetrated against civilians with impunity. The crisis also continues to have regional and multidimensional consequences, with almost half a million refugees in the neighbouring countries.

89. I therefore call upon all parties to protect and respect human rights and stop the violence and harassment, especially against the most vulnerable. More than 36,000 people, predominantly Muslims, remain in seven enclaves throughout the country, most individuals with limited access to basic services. This situation cannot continue. I am encouraged by the Transitional Authority's recent efforts to facilitate the movement of displaced persons who wish to leave enclave areas such as Yaloké. I call upon the Transitional Authority to ensure freedom of movement for all without discrimination, including those remaining in enclaves, and to uphold the obligations of the Central African Republic under international human rights law.

90. I am also concerned about the continuing serious humanitarian situation. More than 2.7 million people, or half of the total population, are in need of assistance and protection, while close to 1 million people remain displaced inside and outside the country. Although the presence of and escorts by MINUSCA continue to expand areas for humanitarian activities, attacks by armed groups continue to prevent assistance from reaching those most in need. Humanitarian needs also continue to surpass available resources because of a lack of funding. Considering the extreme vulnerability of the civilian population, I wish to reiterate the need for timely and sustained support to humanitarian operations, and call upon donors to respond generously to the humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic.

91. I deplore and condemn in the strongest terms the reported sexual abuse of children by international forces deployed to the Central African Republic to protect them. The United Nations is following up on the status of investigations regarding allegations against the French forces and the forces of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic. I have also initiated an independent external review to assess the United Nations handling of the allegations. I will continue all efforts necessary to ensure appropriate and more timely action to bring the perpetrators to justice. I am seriously concerned about recent allegations of exploitation and abuse by MINUSCA personnel. MINUSCA has taken swift action to ensure that thorough and prompt investigations into those serious allegations are conducted by relevant Member States or the United Nations. The United Nations is also ensuring that the needs of victims of abuse are met, in coordination with in-country partners, through its strategy for victim assistance. I urge on all concerned troop- and police-contributing countries to United Nations and non-United Nations operations to take preventive measures and to provide timely and adequate responses.

92. I am grateful to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Babacar Gaye, for his tireless efforts. I am deeply appreciative of the work by the personnel of MINUSCA, the United Nations country team and the humanitarian country team in a dangerous and unpredictable environment. I should like to reiterate my deepest condolences to the countries and families of United Nations staff and humanitarian workers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in the Central African Republic. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, for his role in international mediation on the Central African Republic. I should like to thank the African Union, troop- and police-contributing countries, the ECCAS Conference, the European Union, the World Bank, international partners and multilateral and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to end the suffering of Central Africans and to work with them towards a better future.

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